The SPS Connection

September/October 2005

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Click here to send your SPS-related comments, questions or issues to SPS Desk Officers.

The SPS Connection welcomes all articles, photos and letters from SPS users and the community at large. Please send your input to *The SPS Connection* Editor.

You, the Users, Make a Difference in the SPS Program

SPS Deputy Program Manager Gino Magnifico

As we prepare to roll out the newest version of our automated contracting software, we're reminded of the lesson Standard Procurement System (SPS) leadership learned the hard way not long ago: People — not software and hardware — make or break a program.

This rollout, a significant milestone for SPS, is yet another byproduct of our efforts to employ more of your requirements in the software, as part of our spiral development engineering tactic. Realizing early on the evolving nature of the defense community's acquisition needs, the Program adopted the spiral development approach to leave room for your latest needs.

A host of valuable suggestions from procurement professionals are incorporated into the latest round of our software, SPS Version 4.2 Increment 3. The software, which goes above and beyond past versions, will be the first Web-based, standard contracting system widely used in the Department of Defense (DoD).

Through all of SPS' widely recognized advances, we have never lost sight of the fact that we owe you so much for giving us a second chance four years ago. That's when we realized we needed to bring you into our processes. Program leaders began adhering to some basic principles that continue to guide us every step of the way. The rules we work by:

- **User involvement.** The SPS team opens its requirements, testing and deployment processes to include users, giving them ownership of the system.
- **Keep people informed.** Each version of SPS adds more of the functionality that users want. The SPS team realized early that it would take years to incorporate every last bit of desired functionality into the system. The team established priorities and releases software incrementally.

You, the Users, Make a Difference in the SPS Program [continued]

Through several communications outlets, SPS shares its priorities and important changes with the Program's users. Our communications tools include *The SPS Connection* newsletter, the Center of Excellence and Knowledge Base Web sites, articles in trade magazines and user conferences. Our goal is for all to contribute to a two-way dialog between the Program and its constituents — and not just when an upgrade is on the horizon.

- **Set goals.** SPS aims to communicate the intentions of the program and how it supports DoD's larger goals to the end-users.

By sticking to these principles — and by making the most of input from end-users everywhere — SPS came to its current standing as a critically important asset in the Department's pursuit of integrated business processes. As the program rolls out the latest ground-breaking software, we continue to rely on these principles to ensure success at all levels.

As we do so, we urge everyone in the SPS community to get even more involved in this increasingly important process, whether it be by volunteering to test the software, sending requirements to your Joint Requirements Board representatives, responding to newsletter articles or sharing your thoughts with your Desk Officer. There are lots of ways to shed light on the Program!

— Mr. Gino Magnifico, SPS Deputy Program Manager

Service Talk

From the SPS Desk Officers to You!

This is the place to hear directly from the SPS Desk Officers! These are the folks responsible for SPS' success in your component.

From conference announcements and breaking news to kudos and status updates, Service Talk is where you'll find important news from the Desk Officers.

Army | Navy/USMC | Air Force
DCMA | DLA | ODA

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Service Talk: Army

Everyone COOPs

As the summer months roll along, the Army Response Team (ART) continues to gather Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) information as part of the Army-wide Fire Drill Initiative. The purpose of this exercise is not to single out inadequacies in individual plans but rather to get everyone thinking about what steps they are taking to prevent the loss of data and limit the impact of downtime on productivity.

We hope, by identifying sites with particularly strong COOPs, we might be able to provide examples for others to follow when developing or refining their own plans. To this end, ART developed a scoring methodology to apply to each survey in order to rate site preparedness and the relative strength of each plan. Point values will be assigned based on the answers to a subset of questions, which relate to Procurement Desktop-Defense maintenance. The point values are then added and placed into one of three categories – red, yellow or green. After you complete the survey, you will receive your score and rating, along with comments specific to your situation that may help you develop a thorough plan.

The onset of the end of the fiscal year only reinforces the need to have a solid plan in

Contractors, under the guidance of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, fill bags of sand used to plug levees that burst during Hurricane Katrina. Image courtesy of Defense Link.

place in case of emergency. Please keep an eye out for any communication from ART on this matter, and try to complete the surveys promptly. Your responses will not only help you but may very well help another site when preparing for the worst.

If you have any questions or concerns about your COOP or the Fire Drill Initiative, please do not hesitate to contact the Army Response Team.

— Mr. George Chavis, Army SPS Desk Officer

Army Response Team Contacts:
Ms. Kim Paylor, Army Response Team Manager
Mr. Scot Stitely, Technical Lead

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The SPS Connection is the Official SPS Joint Program Management Office (JPMO) newsletter, published on-line every two months by the SPS JPMO to provide SPS users with information about the program, policies, technical developments, operations, trends and ideas of and about SPS.

Service Talk: Navy and Marine Corps

V4.2.2 SR05 Upgrades

Through June and early July, sites operating Standard Procurement System (SPS) software on Navy-Marine Corps Intranet (NMCI) desktops completed the upgrade to Version 4.2 Increment 2 (v4.2.2) Service Release 05 (SR05). Ms. Dale Taylor, SPS Operational Technical Director, spearheaded the NMCI enterprise push of v4.2.2 SR05.

As a reminder for sites that have not upgraded, the SR05 upgrade must be scheduled through the Joint Program Management Office (JPMO). Plan four-to-six weeks lead-time prior to your desired self upgrade date because the JPMO will send a pre-upgrade package, which needs to completed and reviewed. "Green" status must be assigned before software CDs are sent to your site.

V4.2.3 (Increment 3) Build 4 Testing

Increment 3 testing was August 18 through Labor Day weekend. Navy and Marine Corps testers were at the Government Test Facility in Fairfax, Va., and at the Military Sealift Command (MSC) Headquarters testing v4.2.3 remotely. Many thanks to MSC for the use of their facility and to the claimants and testers for stepping up during a busy time of

U.S. Navy sailors from the USS Whidbey Island unload supplies brought in by a Landing Craft Air Cushion on the beach of Biloxi, Miss., Sept. 9, 2005. The sailors are brought to the beach by the landing crafts in daily shifts to support Katrina relief missions. U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Chris Gethings. Image courtesy of Defense Link.

year to participate in the first round of testing. If you have any questions about Increment 3 or Increment 3 testing, please contact Ms. Sherry Hedding, Navy Joint Requirements Board Representative, at (860) 433-6617 or Ms. Darryn Miller, Navy Component Management Office (CMO) Increment 3 Testing and Integration Planning Team, at (301) 928-8228.

JPMO SPS Classes Scheduled in September

Three SPS classes are scheduled in September. The JPMO realizes

Service Talk: Navy and Marine Corps [continued]

the end of fiscal year workload may interfere with attendance but will still offer an Adapter class, a contracts class and a system administration class. Check the <u>JPMO Training Registration System</u> Web site for dates and to enroll.

Metrics Reminder

Each month, sites using SPS in production are required to post their monthly SPS metrics (operational users, number of awards and dollars obligated) to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the <u>Navy Acquisition Metrics</u> Web site. This data is briefed to RADM Martin Brown, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy (DASN) for Acquisition, each quarter.

Army SPS Conference in December

The Army will hold an SPS conference December 12-16 in Orlando, Fla. The conference is geared primarily to Army users and will focus on the Army's upgrades from v4.2.1 to v4.2.2. The agenda isn't final yet, but the Army Desk Officer has requested Navy participation to provide "lessons learned" and first-hand recaps of the Navy and Marine Corps' experiences upgrading to SPS v4.2.2. More to follow and a request for volunteers to participate is coming in the early fall.

PowerChute Software Used by Air Force for SPS Back-Up Server Power Supplies

The Air Force recently discovered an issue concerning PowerChute 6.x (APC software). The software license expired on July 27. Upon expiration the PowerChute software was unable to run but continually tried to start anyway. This process consumed an extensive amount of system resources and

caused other scheduled tasks to not launch properly. The PowerChute software could be disabled, but this solution would leave the site vulnerable to power failure. Instead, it's recommended that all sites using PowerChute 6.x upgrade to PowerChute 7.0 to continue using the APC software as intended.

— <u>Mr. Eric Ferraro</u>, Navy/Marine Corps SPS Desk Officer

Service Talk: Air Force

Air Force SPS V4.2 Increment 2 Upgrade: Coming to a Base Near You

You've heard about the significant Standard Procurement System (SPS) Version 4.2 Increment 2 (v4.2.2) planning activities Air Force Contracting Information Systems (AFCIS), your Functional Requirements Board (FRB), the Secretary of the Air Force Acquisition's Contracting Business Systems Division (SAF/AQCI) and the Air Force Customer Service Team (AFCST) performed for you over the past year. All of this work is materializing, and one of the final planning activities is currently taking place. Ms. Susan Haskew, Air Force SPS Desk Officer, SAF/AQCI, is leading the development of the Air Force's SPS v4.2.2 upgrade schedule and is working with Air Force FRB members on their respective site prioritizations.

The Quality Testing and Evaluation (QTE) site upgrades are tentatively scheduled to start the week of November 7 with Robbins Air Force Base (AFB), McConnell AFB and Moody AFB. The second wave of QTE upgrades are scheduled to begin the week of November 14 with Tyndall AFB, Peterson AFB and Tinker AFB. The remaining production sites will initiate their upgrades the week of January 9. Five sites are scheduled to upgrade per week, and the upgrade process is forecasted to continue through May.

U.S. Air Force Capt. Erika Smith talks to a patient being transported from an airport in New Orleans, La. in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Image provided by Defense Link

Please note: The deployment dates are dependent on obtaining a conditional Certificate of Networthiness for the SPS v4.2.2 product suite and subsequent product upgrades.

Preparing You for the SPS V4.2.2 Upgrade: AFCIS Confidence Course

AFCIS conducted the initial SPS v4.2.2 Confidence Course at Gunter AFB
August 9 – 11 for QTE AFB system administrators. AFCIS is currently working on additional class offerings for all remaining production AFB site system administrators; the course schedule will be published soon. The Confidence Course

provides a detailed curriculum, including the following topics:

- SPS v4.2.2 General Overview
- SPS v4.2.2 Tools and Documentation Overview – Instrument Panel, Pre/During/Post-Upgrade Guide, Site Readiness Call Agenda, SPS Help Desk Agreement
- Demonstration of the Joint Program Management Office Pre-Deployment Package and Pre/Post-Upgrade Automations
- Walk-through of SPS v4.2.2 Adapter Installation and Configuration
- Sybase Server Administration
- Procurement Desktop-Defense (PD²) Database Administration
- Air Force Zero-Defects Initiatives

AFCST Product Tip of the Month: Purchase Request Reuse

AFB site system administrators recently inquired how to pull the funding back to the Purchase Request (PR) level — while creating a contract within PD² — in order to reuse the funding associated with the original PR.

If you created an award from the PR in question, simply issue to the award a "no cost cancellation," which will revert funding back to the PR level.

A more complex example is when a PR is attached to a released solicitation. In order to 're-use' this PR, you will need to follow the steps below:

- Create an amendment to the solicitation to 'zero-out' all the quantities and funding

  that came from the PR in question
- Either manually create or copy the PR (for interfaced PRs) to a new PR
  (Please note: To use the same PR number, you'll need to unapprove the original PR and renumber it to a placeholder value)
- Use the new PR to create the appropriate document(s)

SPS V4.2.3: AFCIS Working Hard Behind-the-Scenes For You

In July 2004, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Acquisition Technology & Logistics (AT&L) directed the Department of Defense (DoD) to migrate to the Acquisition Domain's interim procurement solution. This mandates all current SPS users and users on legacy contracting systems to migrate to SPS v4.2.3.

AFCIS, under the direction of Ms. Carolyn Lee, Director, Air Force Contracting Information Systems Program Office, was chartered by SAF/AQC to manage the Air Force's transition to SPS v4.2.3. The transition will be significant, with the Major Weapons Systems, Science and Technology, Logistics and Headquarters (HQ) Air Mobility Command contracting communities transitioning to SPS v4.2.3. This effort will impact over 8,000 Air Force users, worldwide, at 110 current SPS deployed AFBs, four Automated Contract Preparation System (ACPS) sites, 16 ConWrite sites and seven Commercial Operated Integrated Systems (COINS) sites. Current plans include decommissioning of both ConWrite and ACPS and developing a contracting interface for COINS.

Service Talk: Air Force [continued]

An Overarching Integrated Product Team — with functional and technical experts from AFCIS, SAF/AQC, HQ Air Force Materiel Command/Contracting, HQ Air Mobility Command and AFCST – is currently evaluating and documenting the functional, technical and manpower steps necessary for a successful transition. Several project documents are already complete, including the Air Force Acquisition Domain System Transition Plan, the Project Master Plan and the Project Master Schedule. Teams are formed and currently completing the analysis and evaluations, which will result in individual Annex Plans for Gap Analysis, Budget, Training, Hardware, Applications Migration, Data Migration, Processes, Communications/Network/Security, Interfaces/Integration, Testing, Change Management and Risk Management.

— Ms. Susan Haskew, Air Force SPS Desk Officer

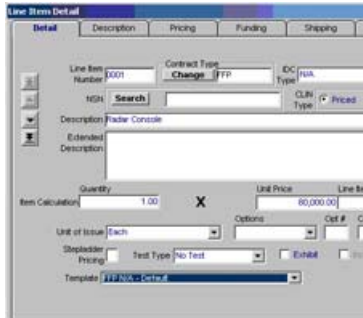## Tips and Tricks: Ensuring Funding Data is Always Correct

Let's review a few basics about the way Procurement Desktop-Defense (PD²) handles funding amounts. The purpose of this review is to help you avoid situations where funding information in the PD² database becomes out-of-sync with the actual amounts obligated on your official paper copies of award documents and modifications.

Often, it's not until we create a contract modification and notice that the "Summary of Changes" screen displays the contract funding incorrectly that we see a problem. Many funding problems are an indirect result of PD² automatically setting the "Total Funded Amount" in an award or modification equal to the total line item cost on the "Detail" tab.

When you change numbers on the "Line Item Detail" tab to equal a value affecting the line item cost (e.g., quantity or unit price), the funded amount on the "Funding" tab automatically changes to match the line item total.

This function was introduced in Version 4.2 Increment 1. Since the majority of award actions are fully funded, this feature prevents the user from having to enter the line item total amount on the "Funding" tab when it

already exists on the "Details" tab. Users can appreciate the time saved when working with contracts having many line items. Another benefit is that auto-populating the line item funding greatly reduces the chance of error we'd encounter manually typing funding amounts for every fully-funded line item.

A change to the Quantity or Unit Price field will automatically update the amount on the "Funding" tab to equal the line item cost. Just tabbing through these fields can sometimes trigger a "Funding" tab refresh.

Despite these benefits, some risks are associated with this functionality. Any time the system automatically updates a critical piece of data, such as the funding amount, extreme caution is required. PD² updates

Tips and Tricks: Ensuring Funding Data is Always Correct [continued]

funds "behind-the-scenes," as a result the user may be unaware the dollar amounts have changed. This situation is most likely a problem when partial funding is provided for a given line item.

Here's a scenario frequently reported to the Help Desk: A user creates a contract with an item to be incrementally funded. In the "Line Item Detail" tab, they enter a quantity and unit price that add up to $100,000. But, this item is only funded at $25,000 for the first quarter of the fiscal year, so the user manually enters the $25,000 amount in the "Funding" tab. The contract is generated, printed, reviewed and everything is correct.

However, prior to final approval, the user goes back into the "Line Item Detail" tab and adjusts either a quantity or unit price — or possibly just tabs through the "Detail" screen without making any changes. They don't revisit the "Funding" tab because they know, regardless of the exact number in the quantity field or the unit price, they're still incrementally funding this action at $25,000. Yet, unknown to the user, the system automatically refreshed the "Funding" tab to reflect the total line item amount, thus changing the obligated amount from $25,000 to $100,000. A contracting officer, having reviewed an earlier, correct printed version, releases the award in PD².

The discrepancy in dollar amounts may not be noticed until the contract is modified. In this scenario, adding another $25,000 of incremental funding, the user examines the "Summary of Changes" (SOC). The user notices, instead of showing the funded amount is increased by $25,000 to $50,000, the SOC states the funding is increased by $25,000 from $100,000 to $125,000. At this

point, if the user were to open the original contract, they would see the system had changed the original funded dollar amount to $100,000 prior to release.

```
SECTION G – CONTRACT
ADMINISTRATION DATA
Summary for the Payment
Office

As a result of this
modification, the total
funded amount for this
document was increased by $
25,000 from $100,000 to $
125,000.
```

In this situation, the worst thing anyone could do is to correct the "Summary of Changes" in Word without correcting the data in the PD² database. It's vitally important that the data in PD² coincides with the information on the printed legal contract.

The best way to handle a situation like this is to explain the dilemma to the Standard Procurement System Help Desk. They will assist you with regenerating the released document, so the printed copy reflects the amount displayed on the "Funding" tab or help you correct the funded amount in the PD² database to reflect the amount on the printed copy.

Situations regarding released documents are handled in accordance with your component's policy.

REVIEW:

- Extra care is required whenever you have a situation where the line

Tips and Tricks: Ensuring Funding Data is Always Correct [continued]

item funded amount is different from the line item total cost.

- Just "tabbing through" the line item detail screen can sometimes trigger PD² to "refresh" the "Funding" tab, which causes the system to change the obligated amount to match the line item total cost.
- Do your final generation just prior to release, and always make sure all prices and funding amounts are correct before releasing the document.
- An important part of data integrity is ensuring the information on the printed document matches the data in the PD² database. ⬤

— <u>Mr. Bob Parillo</u>, SPS User Satisfaction Manager

Ask the Editor

Have a burning question about SPS? We want to hear from you. *The SPS Connection*'s goal is to deliver useful, timely information about the Standard Procurement System (SPS) to users on a regular basis. However, we're aware there are a lot of questions out there we're not addressing. So, we've opened a section in the newsletter for you, the readers, to to send in your questions about the Program. A member of the team at Joint Program Management Office will respond.

One change I'd like to see in future versions of SPS is for the DD350 to become part of the process, rather than completing DD350 forms as a separate function.

— Ms. Rita Edmond

Once the integration of SPS with the Federal Procurement Data System-Next Generation is implemented, a Contract Action Report

(CAR) will replace the DD350. SPS users will be required to complete the CAR, or identify a reason for not reporting the action, prior to executing an award document. The user will launch the CAR from a menu in Procurement Desktop-Defense and will finalize the report at the time of releasing the award.

— SPS Functional Division

Quick Note About V4.2.3 Training

All Version 4.2 Increment 3 (v4.2.3) training will be provided on the Web. While accessibility is one of the advantages of Web-based training, it requires you to set up a couple of extra online accounts:

- *SPS Center of Excellence (COE) portal account* – Many have already signed up for access to the COE. However, if you need a login, you may register on the COE portal home page.
- *Army Knowledge Online (AKO) account* – A document with instructions on how to create an AKO account is available for download on the "Training" component page on the COE portal.

Please look for more detailed information on preparing for v4.2.3 training in the October *InterConnection*.

COL Quentin Peach is SPS' New Program Manager

Get to Know COL Peach in this Special Interview

COL Quentin Peach officially became the Standard Procurement System's (SPS) new Program Manager at a Change of Charter ceremony held in honor of him and retiring COL Jacob Haynes on July 26 at Ft. Belvoir, Va. Peach is settled in at the Joint Program Management Office (JPMO) and is busy acclimating himself to the Program. Recently, he shared his past experiences and first impressions of the Program with *The SPS Connection*.

SPS Connection: First of all, welcome to the SPS Program and congratulations. Since you are this community's new leader, I'm sure everyone's curious to know, especially the folks at the JPMO, what is your management style?

Peach: Thank you. I have great respect for the SPS Program, and I'm excited to be here. To answer your question simply: I'm a consensus-builder. I believe strongly in working with all the communities involved in a project to build a shared vision among the different groups. I understand that in the past the input of SPS users and stakeholders has made a huge difference in the Program. Essentially, listening to the users and building consensus among them made SPS a successful program. I want to continue this

SPS' new Program Manager, COL Quentin Peach, photographed at the Change of Charter ceremony July 26. *Photo by Mr. Richard Mattox, photographer, Program Executive Office Enterprise Information Systems (PEO EIS)*

momentum, spending time with each of the Services and Other Defense Agencies to develop the best system possible for the management of their contracts. I also want to strengthen the relationship between the JPMO and our developer, CACI, to make sure the true requirements we need get into the system.

SPS Connection: There are several components involved in the SPS Program. Have you worked on projects in the past that encompass different communities?

Peach: Yes, several — I began working with the U.S. Army Acquisition Corps, developing

COL Quentin Peach is SPS' New Program Manager [continued]

standard logistics systems for the Army. Then, I worked for the Department of Defense (DoD) developing joint systems, such as the Global Transportation Network, the Y2K Project and a joint logistics program. So, I have extensive experience working with joint Programs. Many of those programs, similar to SPS, followed an Integrated Product Team process, which involves a technical community and a functional community working together.

I'll add that one of the Programs I was involved with, the Standard Army Retail Supply System (SARSS), was on a spiral development lifecycle, like SPS. We were still in the process of testing SARSS at Ft. Bragg, N.C., when the system was deployed to the first Gulf War. So, I believe that experience will help me put myself in the place of the SPS users. I understand the challenges users could face while working with a system still in development.

SPS Connection: What are your first impressions of SPS?

Peach: I think SPS is a great system with a lot of potential. We've reached a significant milestone for the Program — advancing from a client-server software to a Web-based system. Being on the Web, allows us to add functionality to SPS the users have asked for that we haven't been able to give them in the past. However, a Web-based program requires a different navigation structure than a client-server software. Version 4.2 Increment 3 won't work the same as Increments 1 and 2 for that reason. I understand users will initially have an

The official Change of Charter ceremony for SPS was held July 26 at Ft. Belvoir, Va. Former Program Manager, COL Jacob Haynes (left), passes the SPS Charter to COL Quentin Peach (right). The U.S. Army's Program Executive Officer for Enterprise Information Systems Kevin Carroll (center) presents the Charter. *Photo by Mr. Richard Mattox, photographer, PEO EIS*

adjustment period as they get familiar with the new version, but I believe everyone's getting a better system across-the-board.

I'm also very enthusiastic about continuing to use SPS to support contingency-contracting missions, through the Battle Ready Contingency Contracting System and the SPS software itself. I understand the importance of having good support in the field because I was a theater-automation officer in Somalia.

I'm proud to say that sites around the world are using SPS to support contingency missions – both on foreign soil and here in the U.S. It's very important that we support our deployed users as best we can to ensure their ability to produce contracts in the most efficient manner.

SPS Connection: It's good to hear your enthusiasm about the Program. Shifting the

COL Quentin Peach is SPS' New Program Manager [continued]

focus now, in order to properly introduce you to the readers, tell us about yourself. What are your interests outside of the office?

Peach: I have five children, so much of my time outside of work is spent with my family. I'm really involved with the Boy Scouts of America and the local soccer club. I'm a troop leader, so I devote free time to organizing and participating in activities with the scouts. I also spend a lot of time on the soccer field coaching youth teams.

SPS Connection: Sounds like time well spent. Is there anything else you want to share with the SPS users?

Peach: I just want to say that I'm proud to join the SPS Program. I understand we have a user community that is known for its intelligence and dedication to the SPS mission. I look forward to being a part to this community and continuing to work to make SPS the product we need — and want — it to be. Also, I look forward to continuing, in the next versions of SPS, to make the Program into an enterprise business system that will empower both individual users and the entire DoD to work more efficiently. ⬤

Visit the SPS Center of Excellence portal home page to view COL Quentin Peach's biography.

Putting SPS Through the Paces: V4.2.3 Build 4 Testing

The Standard Procurement System's (SPS) latest software Version 4.2 Increment 3 (v4.2.3) faced its most important audience August 15 – September 2. More than 70 defense contracting and IT system professionals tested v4.2.3 for the first time; testers were identified by the Services.

Tests were conducted in four locations over the three-week period. The Army set up shop at Ft. Lee, Va.; the Navy at the Navy Yard in Washington DC; the Air Force at Gunter Annex, Ala.; and the SPS Joint Program Management Office (JPMO) hosted testers, representing all Services, at the Government Test Facility (GTF) in Fairfax, Va.

The strategy for Increment 3 testing is different from prior SPS testing because moving from a client-server format to a Web-application brings significant changes in support approaches, requirements and infrastructure. The test design is based not only on validating requirements but also on reducing risks for the deployment environments.

This time around, individuals tested v4.2.3 Build 4. For Build 4, the database and application servers were hosted at the GTF with each Service test site accessing the application remotely via the Internet.

More than 70 defense contracting and IT system professionals tested Build 4 of SPS v4.2.3 August 15 – September 2. Testers Ms. Gianna Livingston (left), Fleet Industrial Supply Center, Jacksonville, Fla., and Ms. Kim Shelton (right), U.S. Army Contracting Agency, are pictured here at the Government Test Facility (GTF) in Fairfax, Va. The GTF was one of four locations where the software was tested.

After ensuring that all requirements were tested using a Sybase database, testing was performed using Oracle and Microsoft SQL database engines. V4.2.3 Build 4 contains approximately 75 percent of the requirements issued by the Joint Requirements Board (JRB) for Increment 3.

"It's important to the Program that our end-users influence the final build," said SPS Program Manager COL Quentin Peach,

"which is why we elected to have users test the nearly-complete build, prior to testing the final product."

The end-objective is to provide better software and program support. The principle the JPMO is adhering to for v4.2.3 deployment is known as Total Package Fielding (TPF), which provides stakeholder organizations with a fully-supported operational capability at the time of initial fielding. For SPS, TPF includes training and Help Desk support, as well as providing full-deployment support.

Testers Travel Far-and-Wide to Represent Their Organizations and Skill Sets

Testers traveled from all over the country to assess v4.2.3 Build 4, and they represented a wide-variety of skill sets and user groups. All the Services sent contracting officers, system administrators, procurement/contract specialists and technical/security support personnel to represent them at the test sites. Additionally, testers from cross-sections of each Service's mission were present to ensure representation of all interests. For example, testers from legacy systems participated in testing Build 4.

"The Program office gets valuable feedback on the software, documentation, training and functionality by having end-users test and evaluate the software system," said SPS Test Director Cliff Yamamoto.

The testers evaluated the software from both a functional and technical standpoint. This was accomplished by exercising a series of operational scenarios. The Services created the scenarios to represent contracting business processes and procedures

SPS users encounter daily. Requirements and business rules were identified in the operational scenarios and cross-referenced in a database to ensure total coverage and traceability of each requirement. As the scenarios, requirements and business rules were exercised, testers validated whether the application met JRB requirements and other contractual requirements.

Each volunteer's input was collected in a variety of ways, including questionnaires and interviews. Testers also wrote descriptions of issues they encountered and submitted them through a data-collection and management process. The data-collection and management process for each issue included:

- Replicating the issue
- Documenting the steps
- Service test sites providing an initial assessment of the issue's impact on the Service
- Authenticating the data submitted by the Services
- Scoring to determine the issue's severity by all components — Army, Navy/Marine Corps, Air Force, Other Defense Agencies and the JPMO.

"We analyzed all feedback at the end of the testing period to include all users' comments," said Yamamoto. "This information is an important part of the overall evaluation of the product."

Ms. Kim Shelton, a contracting specialist from Ft. McPherson, Ga., tested v4.2.3 Build 4. She said that testing is a good opportunity to learn about the new version early on and

encourages her peers in the contracting community to volunteer.

"As a tester you provide input on behalf of your site that ultimately makes the software a better system for your organization," she said.

The remaining requirements and improvements, as a result of Build 4 testing, will be included in v4.2.3 Build 5 – the final build. The end goal after testing Build 5 and the System Acceptance Test is to fully deploy the software.

The Services will test Build 5 in their own contracting offices beginning in February. Users from SPS-deployed Defense Agencies are also encouraged to test the new software.

SPS users may volunteer to test v4.2.3 by contacting their component's Desk Officer.

Putting SPS Through the Paces: V4.2.3 Build 4 Testing [continued]

The JPMO would like to thank the following members of the defense contracting community for their participation in testing v4.2.3 Build 4. Your time and hard work is appreciated!

Army Testers

Mr. Adarryl Roberts, Army Business Center for Acquisition Systems (ABCAS)
Mr. Bill Price, ABCAS
Ms. Lorraine Scott, ABCAS
Mr. Stan Hathorn, ABCAS
Ms. Bobbie Penn, ABCAS
Ms. Mary Searcy, ABCAS
Ms. Nevia Cashwell, ABCAS
Ms. Trish Owens, ABCAS
Ms. Carolyn Lucas, U.S. Space and Missile Defense Command
Ms. Charlot A.M. Barney, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Seattle District
Ms. Kim Shelton, U.S. Army Contracting Agency (ACA) – Southern Region Contracting Center (SRCC)-East
Ms. Maria Martinez, ACA – Southern Region
Ms. Michele Jackson, ACA – SRCC-East

Navy/Marine Corps Testers

Mr. Alan Karty, SPS JRB Member, Naval Air Systems Command, Weapons Division
Ms. Carol Dunaway, Navy Engineering Logistics Office
Mr. Craig Miller, Military Sealift Command Headquarters
Ms. Lisa Turlington, Military Sealift Command Headquarters
Ms. Elyssa Parana, Military Sealift Command Headquarters
Ms. Darryn Miller, Navy Component Management Office Test Director, Navy Program Executive Office Information Technology
Mr. Ed McGinnis, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR)
Ms. Janet Stone, SPAWAR Systems Center
Ms. Robin Turner, SPS Sustainment Requirements Board Member, SPAWAR Systems Center
Ms. Toy Walker, SPAWAR Headquarters
Ms. Erin Lambert, Naval Facilities Command (NAVFAC) Headquarters
Ms. Ezi Mecha, NAVFAC Headquarters
Ms. Gianna Livingston, Fleet Industrial Supply Center, Jacksonville, Fla., Kings Bay Detachment
Ms. Jennifer Dugan, Naval Medical Logistics Command
Mr. Jerry McDurmon, Navy Crane Center
Ms. Michele Pompane, Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA), Supervisor of Shipbuilding (SUPSHIP) Groton
Ms. Sherry Hedding, SPS JRB Member, NAVSEA, SUPSHIP Groton

Ms. Clara Sullivan, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility, Northwest Regional Maintenance Center
Mr. David Kollmeyer, Marine Corps Tactical System Support Activity
Ms. Debbie Van Hyfte, Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest
Ms. Janice Nieves, NAVAIR, Training Systems Division
Ms. Tracy Fulks, U.S. Marine Corps Contracting Department

Air Force Testers

Ms. Alison Trowbridge, Air Force Contracting Information Systems (AFCIS)
Ms. Audrey Robinson, AFCIS
Mr. Carl Eckell, AFCIS
Ms. Cheryl Martin, AFCIS
Ms. Christy Baguio, AFCIS
Mr. Greg Dennis, AFCIS
Ms. Myra Burroughs, AFCIS
Mr. Sean Halpin, AFCIS
Mr. Jason Blackburn, AFCIS (contractor)
Mr. Mark McVay, AFCIS (contractor)
Mr. Warren Whitby, AFCIS (contractor)
Ms. Jeanette Snyder, Air Force Research Laboratory, Procurement Contracting
Mr. Joe Rosi, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base
Ms. Lisa Littlejohn, Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC)
Ms. Marilyn Stallings, AFMC
Ms. Sandra Phillips, AFMC
Ms. Melinda Infante, AFMC
Ms. Rhonda Provence-Croft, AFMC
Ms. Michelle Thomas, Air Force Office of Scientific Research
Ms. Tessie Dunaway, Eglin Air Force Base
TSgt. Javier Tamez, Air Education and Training Command

Marines Test BRCCS in Counter-Terrorism Mission

Typically, new systems are tested in controlled environments, such as base contracting offices or program offices. But, the Marine Corps is using the Battle Ready Contingency Contracting System (BRCCS) in a major counter-terrorism mission in Africa to see if it benefits their activities in underdeveloped parts of the world.

The mission is a joint-Services initiative to disband terrorist groups in the Horn of Africa region, which includes Djibouti, Yemen, Ethiopia, Kenya and Seychelles. The Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) also provides water, healthcare, veterinary services and construction of public infrastructure to create long-term social stability — the best defense against future terrorism in the region. CJTF-HOA is based at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti. LCDR Tom Wardwell, director of the contracting office at Camp Lemonier, envisions BRCCS "enabling contingency-contracting officers to more effectively award and manage contracts, while reducing redundant data entry and providing central visibility of all contract actions."

BRCCS is the Procurement Desktop-Defense software installed on a laptop computer for mobility. The Standard Procurement System (SPS) created BRCCS

The Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) is using BRCCS for contracting in a mission to disband terrorist groups in the Horn of Africa region. BRCCS' effectiveness in the mission will help determine the product's future deployment in the Marine Corps. Here LCDR Tom Wardwell uses BRCCS in the contracting office at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti, where the mission is based.

in the aftermath of the 9-11 terrorist attacks to automate contracting in contingency environments, where infrastructure is weak and it's uncertain what resources residents can provide. The Third Marine Expeditionary Force already uses the system, and feedback from Wardwell on BRCCS' performance in Djibouti will determine whether the Marines adopt the system for all contingency-contracting units.

"In order for BRCCS to be a viable and useful solution, it must make the contracting

officers' jobs easier and provide useful reporting tools to support decision-making," says Wardwell.

Contract information is noted by hand on paper in the field and documented using word processors back at the office in most contingency-contracting missions today. Maj. Sean Hayes, a contingency-contracting officer at the U.S. Marine Corps Headquarters, explains they are looking for a system to enforce standard naming conventions and capture data much more effectively than taking information manually.

"We want BRCCS to automate the process, so we can store all data on a central network and send it directly up to leadership," says Hayes, who will oversee the implementation of BRCCS if selected.

Wardwell implemented the system in Djibouti the first week of August. After the first two weeks of testing, he observes the system is well equipped to support missions with a centralized operating environment, such as the CJTF-HOA initiative. He also notes BRCCS is an obvious choice

because it's a mobile version of SPS, with which contracting professionals throughout the Department of Defense (DoD) are familiar. "The learning curve is significantly reduced for personnel rotating into the contingency environment because SPS is a familiar program," says Wardwell.

However, Wardwell suggests that enhancing BRCCS with the capability to share data with computers not hooked into a central network would make the system ideal for all possible circumstances in contingency environments. For example – the way the system currently works – if contracting officers travel to Kenya and write contracts to hire architects to design a public library for Djibouti's capital, they must re-enter the contract data into the network when they return in order to capture the information in the central database. The ideal system would allow the officers to transfer data from the laptops into the network electronically, eliminating duplicate work and decreasing the chance for error. This is being addressed in future versions and is an enhancement, for which Wardwell is willing to wait.

While it's too soon to tell if BRCCS will be selected for full-deployment in the Marine Corps – the testing in Djibouti must be completed first – Wardwell expresses a positive outlook for the system.

"I'm glad to see the system is getting more top-level attention. If SPS is to be used throughout DoD, then BRCCS needs to be supported with the same level of interest," says Wardwell. ●

E-Business Transitions Out of DPAP

News from Washington Affecting the SPS Community

In May, the E-Business directorate moved from under Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy (DPAP) and joined Logistics Community Management (LCM) to form Supply Chain Systems Transformation (SCST). Mr. Mark Krzysko, former DPAP, E-Business Deputy Director, heads the organization, which reports directly to the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (AT&L).

With the addition of LCM, Krzysko's responsibilities leading the acquisition community's transition to enterprise business systems are extended to include the logistics community, as well. SCST is linked to DPAP for identifying the business systems' functional needs.

The realignment heightens the Standard Procurement Systems' (SPS) role as the cornerstone system for the Department of Defense's (DoD) Common Supplier Engagement (CSE) initiative. SCST oversees the initiative, which is an effort to improve how DoD responds to sourcing requests and works with suppliers. "SPS helps us implement CSE," says Ms. Lisa Romney, SCST Procurement Analyst. "We'll continue to focus on deploying and strengthening SPS."

SPS still reports to DPAP on functional requirements. More information about SCST is available on the organization's Web site.

Lee Leaves DPAP, Joins GSA

Long-time supporter of the Standard Procurement System (SPS), Ms. Deidre Lee stepped down as Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy (DPAP) on August 6 to accept an opportunity with the General Services Administration (GSA). GSA announced Lee's appointment as the Federal Acquisition Service's (FAS) Assistant Commissioner for Integrated Technology Services on June 30.

Lee's involvement with the defense acquisition community continues in her new role. One of her main responsibilities is to oversee management and development of technology services offered to all branches of the federal acquisition workforce.

"I'm proud to have worked with such a talented and dynamic group of professionals as the SPS user community. By accepting the challenge of deploying a new procurement system and leveraging its capabilities, they help the Department realize its enterprise vision. They've made a difference and made SPS a better program," says Lee, who hopes to continue her relationship with members of the SPS community while with FAS.

Mr. Domenico Cipicchio, formerly the Deputy Director of DPAP for Policy, is acting as DPAP's Director until a permanent replacement for Lee is hired. A press release with more information about Lee and her new position is available on the GSA Web site.

The SPS Connection

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Desk Officers

The SPS Desk Officers are the liaisons between the Joint Program Management Office and the acquisition leaders in the Services and Defense Agencies. The Desk Officers are also your points of contact for questions and comments regarding SPS in your component.

Army Desk Officer:
Mr. George Chavis
703.460.1037

Navy/USMC Desk Officer:
Mr. Eric Ferraro
703.460.1364

Air Force Desk Officer:
Ms. Susan Haskew
703.460.1423

ODA Desk Officer:
Ms. Liz Gooding
703.460.1038

DCMA Desk Officer:
Mr. Roger Berger
703.460.1332

DLA Desk Officer:
Ms. Kate Ehrle
703.322.5990

Click here to send your SPS-related comments, questions or issues to SPS Desk Officers.

The SPS Connection welcomes all articles, photos and letters from SPS users and the community at large. Please send your input to *The SPS Connection* Editor.

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